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“The True and Naturall Constitution of that Mixed Government”: Massinger’s *The Bondman* and the Influence of Dutch Republicanism

by Thomas C. Fulton

IN 1659, just prior to the Restoration, Massinger’s *The Bondman* was apparently produced by “Connivance of the Rump Parliament” in order to stir republican sentiment during the short-lived overthrow of the Protectorate.¹ Such an anachronistic exploitation of the play’s politics occurred again in 1803, when *The Bondman* was conscripted in a propaganda campaign against Napoleon’s feared invasion. In this case, sponsors of a preemptive war posted broadsheets featuring the scene in which Timoleon, the Corinthian leader given special authority to help Syracuse, orders that private “moneys” be brought “to the publike Treasurie” to save them, as from Napoleon’s France, from a feared invasion.² As a presumed commentary on England’s corrupt nobility, the corrupt Syracusan aristocracy protest that losing private wealth would be worse than falling under Carthaginian rule. This scene, the propagandists explain on the broadsheet, was “written by our great Dramatic poet, Massinger: it is at once ELEGANT, NERVOUS, and SUBLIME; and it

¹ *The Dramatic Works of Philip Massinger*, ed. John Monck Mason (London, 1779), 4:372, writes that this was “some Time before the Restoration” in 1659. His source for this is unfortunately not recorded, and perhaps no longer extant. See *The Bondman: An Ancient Storie*, ed. Benjamin Spencer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932), 9.

² 1.3.220–22, from *The Bondman* in *The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger*, ed. Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 1:326. Subsequent quotations from *The Bondman* and other works by Massinger are from this edition unless otherwise noted.

would be to call in question the good Sense, no less than the Spirit and Patriotism of Englishmen, to suppose the forcible Arguments here used, will have less effect upon THEM, than they had on the SYRACUSANS!"³ These anachronistic appropriations of Massinger prefigure subsequent scholarly attempts to ascertain his political position: on the one hand a "democrat," as Coleridge famously argued, a "Whig," or a proponent of some constitutional form of government, and on the other, the proponent of an active, interventionist position toward foreign policy.⁴ Perhaps no play more suggestively illustrates this combination of politics and policy than *The Bondman*, in which an impassioned republican, Timoleon, visits an ailing monarchy to save it from a foreign threat.

The Bondman, performed in 1623 and printed in the following year, appropriately features not only a foreign political invasion, but also, in the form of Corinthian ideology brought by Timoleon, a foreign intellectual invasion. The fictitious arrival of Timoleon and his political ideology suggests the intellectual invasion of a very real sort during the policy crisis of the late 1610s and 1620s: that of Dutch political thought. This reading situates the play within the context of the crown's highly criticized relations with Spain and the Netherlands, relations which created a growing awareness of the Dutch political problem and its ideology. Recent scholarship, such as Malcolm Smuts' anthology, *The Stuart Court and Europe*, has sought to revise the traditional view of England's intellectual insularity, particularly with regard to political systems and conceptions of social order.⁵ Like the authors of that volume, I ques-

³ Published by J. Hatchard, 190 Piccadilly; in *ibid.*, 309–10. The broadsheet printed an interestingly long excerpt, 1.3.213–368, with some cuts.

⁴ *Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. Thomas M. Raysor (London: Constable & Co., 1936), 77. A now classic Whig account of Massinger's politics was made by the historian Samuel R. Gardiner, who wrote that Massinger's plays "have a treatment of the politics of the day so plain and transparent, that any one who possesses only a slight acquaintance with the history of the reigns of the first two Stuarts can read it at a glance" ("The Political Element in Massinger," *Contemporary Review* 28 [1876]: 495). Gardiner's sometimes reductive approach to Massinger's topicality became an example for politically skeptical scholars, who query how the allegorical assignments that characterize these readings—Syracuse equals England, for example—are authorized. These scholars include Allen Gross in "Politics in Massinger," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1700* 6 (1966): 279–90, who actually concedes a good deal of the topical tension in *The Bondman*. See also Gerald Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 4:768–69, 787, 798, and Philip Edwards, in *Plays and Poems*, ed. Edwards and Gibson, 2:303. Such criticism often presupposes that the playwright would not have been "cognizant to the vicissitudes of Anglo-Dutch diplomacy," and that the theater simply would not function as a forum for political criticism (Gross, "Politics in Massinger," 283).

⁵ R. Malcolm Smuts, ed., *The Stuart Court and Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

tion the revisionist view that ideological positions are motivated almost solely by factional interest. Rather, I see the ideological paradigms experimented with in Massinger's work as inquiries into the sociological implications of different European power structures. Much of Dutch political thought before 1650 was "right of resistance" theory geared toward justifying the Dutch Revolt, though with the notable exceptions of republicanism and theories of mixed government, particularly before the fall of the republican leader Oldenbarnevelt in 1618.⁶ *The Bondman's* treatment of Dutch ideology is evidenced in Massinger's sometimes detailed echoes of a largely overlooked pamphlet by Thomas Scott on the Dutch problem and its republicanism. The play is also shaped by Dutch ideology in Massinger's borrowing of his own political language from a play on contemporary Dutch politics, *Sir John Van Olden Barnevelt* (1619)—the republican leader who had fallen only a year before. David Norbrook's *Writing the English Republic* and other recent work have begun to establish the existence of a republican culture before the outbreak of the English Civil War, either as an actual alternative, or as a more innocuous way of criticizing the Stuarts.⁷ The Anglo-Dutch crisis precipitated an intensified interest in Dutch political history and ideology, yet its importance to the development of English political representations has remained largely unexplored.

The present essay seeks to understand Massinger's oppositional treatment of Stuart politics and policy in the light of neo-Tacitean and Dutch-influenced political paradigms. It is difficult to talk about tensions in Stuart political thought without running into the problem that the language we use to describe political systems was then only just emerging; our term "absolutism," for example, used frequently to describe Stuart rule, is a nineteenth-century neologism with complicated, if anachronistic connotations. Glenn Burgess and James Daly

⁶ The growth of Dutch political thought after the Revolt is discussed in Eco Hatsma Mulier, "The Language of Seventeenth-Century Republicanism in the United Provinces: Dutch or European?" in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 179–95. See also Mulier, *The Myth of Venice and Dutch Republican Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1980), 54–76; E. H. Kossman, "The Development of Dutch Political Theory in the Seventeenth Century," in *Britain and the Netherlands*, ed. J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossman (London: Chatto & Windus, 1960), 91–110; Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt, 1555–1590* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 260–87.

⁷ See David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also Markku Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought, 1570–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), especially 119–271.

have vastly revised standard perceptions of Stuart absolutism, yet their sense that the term “absolute” only began to have consistently “absolutist” connotations by the Civil War ultimately over-shoots the mark, and blurs valuable distinctions in Stuart political discourse.⁸ Scott, Massinger and their opponents at court frequently use “absolute” to describe a monarchy that has few or no obligations to Parliament. In James I’s own definition of a “free and absolute Monarchie,” power originated from the monarch alone. A king, James wrote, may act “without advice or authoritie” of Parliament, “which is nothing else but the head Court of the king and his vassals.”⁹ Thus, even by Jacobean parlance, “absolute monarchy” was a monarchy that acted with some disregard for the authority of Parliament. Despite Burgess’s important efforts to downplay what he terms the “‘absolutism’—‘constitutionalism’ grid” used by modern interpreters to understand the tensions of Stuart political ideology, the fact remains that James’s own contemporaries used such a grid.¹⁰ Foreign forms of government were often projected on this grid to help define the English system and to shape foreign policy. Fulke Greville, for example, writing perhaps as much about Jacobean political concerns as he was about Sidney, wrote that Elizabeth’s possible marriage with the Duc d’Alençon caused Sidney to fear that England’s “more moderate form of Monarchie” would be “metamorphosed” to become a “precipitate absoluteness.”¹¹ Writers of the 1620s worried about

⁸ James Daly, “The Idea of Absolute Monarchy in Seventeenth-century England,” *Historical Journal* 21 (1978): 227–35. The OED shows the earliest political use of “absolutism” and “absolutist” to be 1830. See also Glenn Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), especially 17–62. Burgess simply goes too far in such suggestions as that *absolute* “frequently implied no more (and no less) than that the king actually possessed all the powers that a king ought to possess” (31), or that “absolutism existed, at best, only on the very margins of English political thought” (90), when Charles himself seems to fit his very definition: “the test must be . . . whether or not a person asserts the king’s authority to make law, to break law (or, at any rate, to be free of it), or to tax (i.e. to dispossess), without consent” (90). The Forced Loan of 1627, for example, was a mandated tax beyond the consent of Parliament. These actions were supported by ideology that (even by Burgess) could only be called absolutist, by Sibthorpe and Manwaring, who were key figures in the development of English political thought. See Johann P. Sommerville, *Thomas Hobbes: Political Ideas in Historical Context* (London: Macmillan, 1992), vii. Sommerville shows how Hobbes’s political thought grew out of the absolutism of the 1620s and 1630s, and in doing so, works against the perception of “absolutism” as a still much undeveloped concept (see especially 15 and 172 n. 35). For another definition of absolutism, see Sommerville, “Absolutism and Royalism,” in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450–1700*, ed. J. H. Burns and Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 348.

⁹ James I, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, in *The Political Works of James I*, 54, 63.

¹⁰ Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution*, 41.

¹¹ Indeed, Greville goes on extensively about the potential results of an imposition of

the alliances created first by the Spanish Match, and then by policy regarding Spanish imperial expansion. They used a grid that pits the more "absolute" form of monarchy of Spain and even England against the constitutionalist structure of the Dutch. Like the often-exaggerated condition of absolutism that they wrote against, these writers experimented with alternate extremes, using rather loosely such ideas as "mixed-government" and "republic."¹²

In the early 1620s, during the early stages of the Thirty Years' War, the Dutch sought on various occasions to form a military alliance with England against the common enemy of Spain. These negotiations were especially important to English supporters of Frederick, James I's brother in law, who lost his hold on Bohemia in 1621 to Spanish imperial encroachment. An English alliance with the Dutch would not only protect the two countries themselves from Spanish imperialism, but also help restore the Palatine to its rightful Protestant owner. These negotiations were complicated by the crown's interest, despite widespread disapproval, in a match for Prince Charles and the Spanish Infanta. By the time that *The Bondman* was first performed in 1623, negotiations with Spain had shifted dramatically, when, rejected by the princess and the Spanish court, Charles and the duke of Buckingham returned in October. Fired with an ardent dislike of the Spanish and widespread popular support, these nobles now touted the cause of war with Spain, and sought to awaken England's lethargic foreign policy. Yet the crown and even Parliament was reluctant, again, to finance the very war they proposed. This reluctance stemmed in part from England's vastly depressed national economy and James's own lack of funds.

The rising fear of Spain was accompanied by criticism of not only Stuart foreign policy, but also the presumptions of prerogative implicit in the crown's decisions. These fears gave rise to an unusually rich interaction between the Anglo-Spanish crisis and late Jacobean and Caroline drama, and an unusual public interest in this international concern.

French absolutism on the Elizabethan monarchy, that it would "lift up monarchie above her ancient legall circles, by banishing all free spirits, and faithful patriots, with a kind of shaddowed ostracisme till the ideas of native freedom should be utterly forgotten" (Fulke Greville, *Life of Sir Philip Sidney*, ed. N. Smith [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907], 54). See Clifford C. Huffman, *Coriolanus in Context* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1971), 101.

¹² From his interest in Oldenbarnevelt and Roman forms, Massinger preferred stricter republicanism, and Scott, using slightly more contemporary Dutch ideology, preferred "mixed government," but the distinction matters less than the manner in which they used these to criticize English politics.

Popular sentiment against England's policy towards Spain so pervaded the literature of the period that audiences had grown accustomed to thinly veiled allegorical treatments, as in Middleton's *A Game at Chess*, which was produced a few months after the publication of *The Bondman*. Hans Werner has counted fifty-five plays, masques and entertainments alluding to the Thirty Years' War, and ten devoted entirely to the topic.¹³ A number of lost plays may be added to this list, whose disappearance or non-publication, as Margot Heinemann observes, may be accounted for in part by their topical and confrontational nature. Some were acted but never printed, and include such suggestive titles as *A Match and No Match*, *The Spanish Contract*, and Massinger's *The King and The Subject*, *The Tyrant*, and *The Spanish Viceroy*—which the players produced illegally, and were caught.¹⁴

Anti-Spanish sentiment is also expressed in an outpouring of pamphlets, many of which directly influenced dramatic representations. Indeed, criticism of the crown resulted in various attempts at censorship. In 1620, just before Parliament, James issued a proclamation stating that all persons must "take heed how they intermeddled, by pen or speech, with causes of state, or secrets of empire, either at home or abroad."¹⁵ He later protested, in a statement published in 1621, "Wee cannot with patience endure Our subjects to use such Antimonarchicall words to Us concerning their Liberties."¹⁶ Gardiner's comment that "James might as well have spoken to the winds" is true, though Massinger's persistent troubles with the censor reveal that he was forced to exercise some discretion or veiling in his writing.¹⁷ These troubles and interactions with the censor suggest that censorship *was* "important in shaping the silences

¹³ Hans Werner, "The Hector of Germanie, or The Palsgrave, Prime Elector and Anglo-German Relations of Early Stuart England: The View from the Popular Stage," in *The Stuart Court and Europe*, ed. Smuts, 113. This is from 1620 to the closing of theaters in 1642.

¹⁴ For further commentary on the lost plays, see Margot Heinemann, "Drama and Opinion in the 1620s," in *Theatre and Government under the Early Stuarts*, ed. J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 239. Heinemann also observes that Massinger published two plays "in 1622-3, and then none for the next five years, resuming in 1629 when the death of Buckingham may have made texts like *The Roman Actor*, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, *The Unnatural Combat* and *The Maid of Honour* seem less risky" (239-40).

¹⁵ Proclamation, Dec. 24, 1620, quoted from Samuel R. Gardiner, *History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War 1603-1642* (New York: AMS Press, 1965), 3:392.

¹⁶ James I, *Political Writings*, ed. J. P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 263.

¹⁷ Gardiner, *History of England*, 3:392.

in political writing," as Burgess and others have doubted.¹⁸ Indeed, the history of censorship from the period, both of plays and non-dramatic literature, gives an indication of how the plays themselves were understood. Thomas Scott, an extremely prolific, "bestselling" pamphleteer, fled to the Netherlands when his authorship of the *Vox Populi* (1620), a book about the Spanish Match, was revealed; the book's satiric account of the Spanish ambassador Gondomar was widely believed to be true.¹⁹ It and other of Scott's writings about Gondomar informed dramatic treatments of the ambassador, as in *A Game at Chess*, for which Gondomar had Middleton arrested.²⁰ As Hans Werner points out, Scott defended himself by protesting that playwrights say the same things and get away with it through the veil of allegory. "Why not Gondomar," he wrote, "as well as Hieronymo or Duke d'Alva? And why not Philip, as well as Peter, or Alfonso, or Caesar? . . . Why might I not make as bold with them, as they [the playwrights] our . . . Queen Elizabeth, or King James, or the King and Queen of Bohemia?"²¹ Scott's familiarity with topical drama suggests the possibility of a more circular form of influence, that dramatic treatments may have shaped his representations as well as he theirs, as is usually presumed.

The Master of the Revels at this time, Sir Henry Herbert, had ties with Massinger, since his father had served in the Herbert household. Close members of the Herbert family, such as William Herbert, earl of Pembroke—member of the House of Lords—promoted war against Spain, and Massinger's address to Herbert in *The Bondman's* dedicatory epistle may suggest an alliance of opinion.²² The unusual dedication to the censor—which would now seem uncomfortably close to bribery—suggests in its deferential gestures a mutual recognition of the play's potentially

¹⁸ Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution*, 12. For a good overview of the debate on this topic, see 2–13.

¹⁹ J. P. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England, 1603–1640* (London: Longman, 1987), 45. Given the slight mention of Bohemia, the *Vox Populi* was probably written about the spring of 1619. See Gardiner, *History of England*, 3:392.

²⁰ For a good discussion of Scott's influence on Middleton, see *A Game at Chess*, ed. T. H. Howard-Hill (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 18–29.

²¹ Thomas Scott, *Vox Regis* (1624), 10, in *Workes* (Utrick [sic], 1924; facsimile: Amsterdam, 1973); quoted from Werner, "Hector," 118–19.

²² As has been speculated by Gardiner, "Political Element in Massinger," 496, and Jerzy Limon, *Dangerous Matter: English Drama and Politics in 1623/24* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 76. S. L. Adams has also shown the central importance of Pembroke in pushing war with Spain ("Foreign Policy and the Parliaments of 1621–1624," in *Faction and Parliament*, ed. Kevin Sharpe [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978], 139–71). For more on Herbert's sympathy with the anti-Spanish cause, see T. H. Howard-Hill's introduction to Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chess*, especially 17–23.

inadmissible material. When the play was “first Acted” Herbert “taught others to allow it for currant,” since his “liberal suffrage” gave the play “allowance.”²³ The letter should be read in the context of some less fortunate encounters with the authorities, including the lost *Spanish Viceroy* (1624), whose illegal performance forced the actors to produce a rather dire apology.²⁴ Massinger’s words that official sanction will give the play “if not a welcome entertainment . . . at worse a gracious pardon” bear underneath the mere formality a very real sense of what official approval accomplishes.

David Norbrook points out that Massinger’s attacks on Thomas Carew’s cavalier tendency to compose “servile Encomions” “in corners” rather than “indur[ing] the public test” betrays Massinger’s sense of the poet’s imperative to play an active public role.²⁵ Massinger’s determination to push the limits of acceptability is dramatized poignantly in *The Roman Actor* (1626), where the tragedian is accused of “search[ing] into the secrets of the time / And under Fain’d names on the stage present / Actions not to be toucht at.”²⁶ Indeed, Massinger’s long history of censorship suggests a remarkable persistence. In three other cases beyond the debacle of *The Spanish Viceroy*, Massinger apparently tried to publish as confrontationally as possible and then, on being thwarted by the censor, revised plays accordingly.²⁷ Indeed, in a famous instance, and one that lends much to our sense of Massinger’s Taciteanism, King Charles himself took occasion to censor Massinger’s work. Herbert had doubts about *The King and the Subject* (1638) that prompted him to send it to the king, who “set his marke upon [this passage] with his owne

²³ Massinger, *Plays and Poems*, 1:313.

²⁴ “We acted a play called *The Spanish Viceroy*, not being licenced under your worships hande, nor allowd of: wee doe confess and herby acknowledge that wee have offended, and that it is in your power to punishe this offense, and are very sorry for it” (December 20, 1624, in Joseph Quincy Adams, *The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917], 21).

²⁵ Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, 66.

²⁶ *The Roman Actor* (1.3.37–39), from *Plays and Poems*, vol. 3.

²⁷ In another case of censorship, the first draft of *Believe as You List* (1631) was rejected by Herbert, as this representation of international intrigue “did contain dangerous matter.” Massinger revised the play and received a license, an event which may have occasioned the ironically disingenuous apology in the prologue, “yf you find what’s Roman here, / Grecian, or Asiaticq, drawn to[ol] nere / late, & sad example, tis confest / hee’s but an English scholler at his best, / a stranger to Cosmographie” (Prologue, 3–7, in *Plays and Poems*, 3:305). Joseph Quincy Adams, *Dramatic Records*, 19. See also Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 4:762. Annabel Patterson has written on Massinger and censorship in *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 87–99.

hande," and wrote "This is too insolent, and to bee changed." Herbert treasured Charles's act of royal intrusion, and fortunately preserved the passage marked "to be remembered" by posterity, leaving a telling fragment from the lost play. "Note that the poett *makes* it the speech of a king," Herbert wrote, suggesting the language might well be used outside of its dramatic context, presenting real people, as Aretinus in *The Roman Actor* says, "under Fain'd names."²⁸ Herbert (and the king) seem to have associated the fictional foreign king with Charles himself:

Moneys? Wee'le rayse supplies what whys we please,
And force you to subscribe to blanks, in which
We'le mulct you as wee shall thinke fitt. The Caesars
In Rome were wise, acknowledging no lawes
But what their swords did ratifye, the wives
And daughters of the senators bowinge to
Their wills, as deities.²⁹

Charles probably recoiled at the passage's "insolence" in the passage's sardonic parodying—in "force you to subscribe"—of the Forced Loan of 1627, and the ideology used to buttress un-parliamentary taxation.³⁰ Massinger criticizes the Stuart position that "the King is above the law" and that kings consider themselves "deities."³¹ That the "wives and daughters of the senators" bow to the wills of caesars suggests a Tarquin-like potential for violation. Massinger also uses the republican

²⁸ Joseph Quincy Adams, *Dramatic Records*, 22–23. My italics.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Indeed, this is a famous and defining moment in absolutist ideology. One propagandist, Sibthorpe, wrote for the sake of the loan that the king has a "Speciall Prerogative, and absolute obedience which sovereignes have, and Subjects owe." "The speciall Scope of my text aims at the dues to all Princes, whether good Governours or Tyrants," he wrote, with the question of whether the governor be good or bad bearing very little consequence. "If Princes command anything which the subjects can not performe; because it is against the laws of 1 God, or of 2 Nature, or 3 impossible; yet subjects are bound to undergoe the punishment with out either resistance, or railing and reviling and so to yield a passive obedience, where they can not exhibit an active one." Robert Sibthorpe, *Apostolike Obedience* (London, 1627), 1, 2, 5, 13, my italics. For good accounts, see Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology*, 127–31; and Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1992), 34–35. Sibthorpe's and Maynwaring's books ignited enormous controversy, which in part led to the Petition of Right. The parliamentary proceedings against Maynwaring for his similar book *Religion and alegiance in two sermons Preached before the Kings Magistie* (London, 1627) were especially formative for a constitutional opposition to the king. See *The proceedings of the Lords and Commons in the year 1628 against Roger Manwaring* (London, 1709). For more on this passage and un-parliamentary taxation, see Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis, 1632–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 72, 135.

³¹ James I, *Political Writings*, 75.

foundation myth suggestively in *The Roman Actor*, where the henchman to Domitian reports of malcontents who “conclude there was / A Lucrece once, a Collatine, and a Brutus, / But nothing Roman left now, but in you / The lust of Tarquin” (2.1.132–35).

Another text where the “silences” of censorship are fortunately preserved is the co-authored *Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt* (1619), which was banned and then allowed in heavily censored form, though not published.³² Like *The King and the Subject*, the play characterizes European political tensions in Tacitean and republican terms. The censored manuscript reveals methods of representing tensions between monarchical and senatorial systems that informed similar tensions in *The Bondman*. *Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt* pioneeringly dramatizes these tensions in recent Dutch history—the previous year—giving a poignant voice to the republican position. Indeed, this play also deserves more attention, and may have itself responded critically to James I, who, according to S. L. Adams, “never lost his distaste for Dutch republicanism and had therefore supported the Stadtholder Maurice against Oldenbarnveldt.”³³ Oldenbarnveldt’s closing lament in the play, worth citing at some length, was censored heavily; the brackets indicate the initial censorial cancellations, though the entire passage was, as if after reconsideration, marked for deletion.

Octavius, when he did affect the Empire,
and strove to tread upon the neck of Rome,
and all hir auncient freedoms, [tooke that course
that now is practisd on you]: for the Cato’s
and all free speritts slaine, or else proscribd
that durst have stird against him, he then sceasd
the absolute rule of all: [you can apply this]:
And here I prophecie, I that have lyvd
and dye a free man, shall, when I am ashes
changed [to a Monarchie], you’ll howle in vaine
and wish you had a Barnavelt againe.³⁴

The Master of the Revels (in this case, Sir George Buc), wary of the classification “monarchie,” changed the wording to “another form” before crossing out the entire passage. In an earlier passage, however, the comparison to monarchy is left untouched: “would you change the govern-

³² Heinemann, “Drama and Opinion,” 240.

³³ S. L. Adams, “Foreign Policy,” 149.

³⁴ John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, *Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt* (Malone Reprints, 1980), 2434–47; see annotations 76–77.

ment, / make it a monarchy?" (90–91). Oldenbarnavelt's comparison of contemporary shifts in political structures with the destruction of republican Rome was also irksome to Buc, who crossed out "took that course / that now is practis'd on you," and wrote "cutt off[f] his opposites," which ruins the sense of historical comparison (as well as the meter). The play itself seems hesitant to designate the form of government opposite to "monarchy," and instead relies on such descriptions as Oldenbarnavelt's assurance that in "this government" your "liberties be safe" (733). This lack of designation stems in part from the fact that a language for discussing republican forms of government, like that describing "absolute" monarchy, was only in the process of forming. As Norbrook points out, the Romans themselves lacked a word for the "republican" government they fought over, and the term was only gaining currency in the seventeenth century.³⁵ In *The Bondman*, five years after *Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt*, Timoleon similarly speaks, though with more definition, of the threat of "chang[ing] the Aristocracy of Corinth into an absolute Monarchy" (1.3.131–32). The court ladies comically echo Timoleon's "Aristocracy" as a "commonwealth" and "republique" (1.3.164), the use of which needs to be added to a recent discussion on the currency of "republic" to signify republican government; this instance predates the OED's examples by well over sixty years.³⁶

In another passage especially appropriate to *The Bondman*, Oldenbarnavelt talks of the encroaching monarchical rule as one of enslavement; again, the brackets designate censorial omissions: "we are lost forever: and from Freeman growne [slaves] / [slaves to the pride of one we have rais'd up] / [unto this giant height, the Spanish yoak]" (720–22). Buc crossed this out and wrote in the margin, arguing with the political position behind the speech: "Slaves so contemptible: as no worthie Prince that would have men, not sluggish Beaste his servants would ere vouchsafe the owning, Now my friends" (23). Yet, despite Buc's supposedly aesthetic objection, the concept of slavery was often used to criticize the conditions of power in an absolute monarchy. Indeed, Massinger used this very theme in *The Bondman*, which derives much from the earlier play.

Jerzy Limon's reading of *The Bondman* is appreciative of the influences of the contemporary international situation, and makes a rather com-

³⁵ Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, 16.

³⁶ *Ibid.*; Thomas N. Corns, "Milton and the Characteristics of a Free Commonwealth," in *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. David Armitage, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 25–42, 27 n. 4.

plicated case for the play's responsiveness to contemporary policy. He argues that between the first performance on December 3, 1623 and its eventual publication in mid- to late March, the play was substantially revised to include events occurring within the period and the sentiments of pamphlets responding to the state of affairs between England and the Netherlands. These supposed revisions to the play, Limon argues, were made with a consciousness of a now active Parliament. The two events which he sees as almost certain to have caused Massinger to substantially revise the play, even adding a new first act, are the plea for money in Parliament (Feb. 24 and following), and the anticipation of the arrival of the German mercenary, Count Mansfeldt, who would act as army leader. Yet Mansfeldt arrived in London on April 14, having only announced his willingness to lead English troops in late March, though rumors of his potential participation really only circulated in mid-April.³⁷ Limon's argument that *Timoleon* was created with Mansfeldt in mind thus requires an incredibly tight chronology. (It should also be noted that Parliament was never consulted on Buckingham's blundered decision to employ Mansfeldt.³⁸) The other aspects of Limon risks the play's topicality on the uncertain possibility that these revisions were made between late December and March. The argument that Parliament would not have been an audience prior to this is faulty, and at any rate unnecessary in itself, since influential figures and people whose opinions mattered to the playwright would be at Whitehall as well as the Cockpit—though one need hardly have the “right” audience to compose topically influenced fictions.³⁹ Parliament also *was* an imminent possibility, and constituted a central part of the literature concerned with the Spanish threat; the hope of affecting parliamentary policy is expressed, for example, in the nature of Scott's discussions about Parliament in *Vox Populi*.⁴⁰ Although they may have been

³⁷ Limon, *Dangerous Matter*, 67, 74–75; see Gardiner, *History of England*, 5:221–23.

³⁸ S. L. Adams, “Foreign Policy,” 159.

³⁹ The argument that Parliament would not have been an issue for the playwright is more generally made by Gross, who argues simply that the play would not have presumed to speak either to the king or to Parliament (“Politics in Massinger,” 279–83). See also Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 768–69.

⁴⁰ The role of Parliament in decision-making takes a prominent place in pamphlets from 1620 to 1624, and money to finance a military campaign—an obvious need in a fiscally drained government—would have come through a parliamentary proceeding. Indeed, parliamentary deliberations in 1621 regarding the possibility of military intervention had been left tensely suspended. The parliamentary proceedings were also published in two editions, such that the public could be well-informed about matters of state. STC records two printings. This seems to be evinced in James's added statement towards the

especially appropriate to the parliamentary proceedings of late February 1624, the first act's patriotic appeal for contributions to the national cause—famously exploited in the Napoleonic era—had for a long time been part of anti-court literature.

In the *Vox Populi* of 1620, for example, Scott portrays Gondomar as a wily Machiavel, set to undermine English national security by the Spanish monarch's intentions to "conquer" England.⁴¹ Gondomar assures the Spanish king that James's financial stress, added to his difficulties with Parliament, will trap him into an especially close alliance with Spain. Gondomar's window on the English court allows him to see that James will succumb to Spain, for it is the "necessity of a state so exhausted, as it is unable to supply his desires."⁴² Like the situation in Massinger's *Syracuse*, the "publike Treasurie" is exhausted, and the lazy solution that Scott sees the Stuart court, like the Syracusan court, approaching is capitulation to the wealthy conqueror. According to Scott, James's stubborn falling-out with Parliament would induce him to choose Spanish relief rather than turn to Parliament: "the King," the fictitious Gondomar says, "will never endure Parliament again, but rather suffer absolute want than receive conditional relief from his subjects."⁴³ "Conditional" is an important term: because James intends to rule absolutely, he jeopardizes national security. Gondomar goes on, "it is unlikely there should ever be a Parliament, and impossible the kings debts should be payd, his wants sufficiently repaired . . . by any course but by marriage with us."⁴⁴ By challenging the tawdry reasons for James's intransigence, this satiric account means, of course, to prevent just that—rule without Parliament. Scott's argument linking absolute rule to the problem of national interests evolves through a series of pamphlets into a set of highly developed ideological concerns common to both Massinger and Scott.

Like Massinger, Scott satirizes the courtly unwillingness to sacrifice to the national cause: Gondomar assures the Spanish king in *Vox Populi* of the people who "unmeasurably desired the match might proceed," which especially include "the begging and beggarly courtiers," since the Spanish alliance would "furnish their wants" and prevent their hav-

end, as will be further noted, that "carping wits" had made much of his last statements, which he set about to correct.

⁴¹ *Vox Populi* (London, 1620), B1, verso.

⁴² *Ibid.*, B2, verso.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, B3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

ing to donate money.⁴⁵ "There are so many about him," says Gondomar, referring to the king, "perswading the king he may rule by his absolute prerogative without a Parliament, and thus furnish himself by marrying with us" without having to levy subsidies, as the "levying of subsidies and taskes have been the onely use princes have made of such assemblies."⁴⁶ Scott draws an important distinction between the court as the immediate adjunct to the throne, and the aristocracy and gentry associated with "parliament." Such a division is also apparent in the court figures and the more disconnected aristocracy in *The Bondman*. Scott sees English cooperation with Spain as both a symptom and a cause of absolutism, where parliamentary sovereignty serves the real needs of the nation against weak and parasitic courtiers. "Whereas," he contrasts, "some Free minds amongst them representing our Nobility who preserve the privileges of subjects against sovereign invasion, call for the course of common lawe (a lawe proper to their nation) these other tyme servers [i.e., the corrupt courtiers] cry the lawes down, and cry up the prerogative."⁴⁷ Scott's "free minds among the nobility" connotes a freedom achieved through separation from the wrong kind of courtly allegiance. In *The Bondman*, Timagoras also appeals to those that live as "free Lords of Syracuse" (1.1.61–62), in contrast to the corrupt Syracusan courtiers.

Scott's early arguments pose a criticism similar to that of Timoleon in act 1, where he rebukes the court aristocracy, and indeed, in this depiction of the corrupt court, Massinger departs sharply from his classical sources. But while Massinger's depiction remains broadly informed by the somewhat monotonous thrust of Scott's earlier pamphlets, he was, I would argue, more distinctly influenced by Scott's quite subversive little book of 1623, *A Tongue-combat*.⁴⁸ Along with his standard critique of absolutism implicit in his treatment of Spain and the Anglo-Spanish connection, here the ideological implications of Dutch politics are brought into the fore. Fully entitled *A Tongue-combat, lately happening between two English soldiers in the tilt-boat of Gravesend, the one going to serve the King of Spaine, the other to serve the States General of the united provinces, wherein the cause, course, and continuance of those Warres, is debated, and*

⁴⁵ Ibid., B2.

⁴⁶ Ibid., B3.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Thomas Scott [Henry Hexham, pseud.], *A Tongue-combat, lately happening between two English soldiers in the tilt-boat of Gravesend, the one going to serve the King of Spaine, the other to serve the States Genreal of the united provinces, wherein the cause, course, and continuance of those Warres, is debated, and declared*. (London [?], 1623).

declared, the book relates a debate between two English soldiers crossing the English channel. The views attempt to portray the contrasting views of Scott's countrymen for and against a Dutch alliance. This book continues some of the same criticism of the earlier pamphlets, but adds an ideological dimension, taken from the events of recent Dutch history, that associate some of these systemic characteristics (such as moral laziness) with different political structures. Political systems and foreign policy are connected even in the stated intentions of the crown's overtures of friendship towards Spain. In some "Instructions Additional" given to Sir John Digby on an embassy to Spain in 1617, for example, the threatening implications of Dutch politics become cause for alliance. These instructions declared the hope that a Spanish alliance with England would put an end to "a creeping disposition to make popular states and alliances to the disadvantage of monarchy."⁴⁹ On the other hand, factions of the court against the Spanish alliance—often Puritans—seemingly harbored republican sympathies.⁵⁰

The play's reliance on Scott's *Tongue-combat* is suggested in the resonance of language and in the comparison between an absolutist state and a "mixed constitution" or, in Massinger's case, a republic. One instance where the play echoes the pamphlet's language lies in their common use of "dull sleep" to characterize the condition of England—or in Massinger, "Sicily." "Concerning your ill government of the state," says Timoleon, "the greatest, noblest, and most rich / stand in the first file guilty" because they have not "studied the publicke good, but [their] particular ends" (1.3.167–72). Timagoras and Leosthenes, free lords and the "good" members of Timoleon's audience within the play, agree: "he speaks home," Timagoras says, "And to the purpose" (1.3.192–93). The criticism is "sharpe," but as such "better" (1.3.178–79). In *Tongue-combat*, Scott declares that he must speak with "the sudden and unexpected alarm of bold, daring and desperate opposition for Falsehood"—or a milder, more conciliatory manner—"will not awaken that stupid Lethargie, or reserved Foxe sleepe of policie, wherein they lye bed-

⁴⁹ As quoted from *The Letters and Life of Francis Bacon*, ed. J. Spedding, by S. L. Adams, "Foreign Policy," 141.

⁵⁰ According to S. L. Adams, "Both Southampton and Sandys were accused at various times of republican sympathies" ("Foreign Policy," 144). Adams points to accusations of Southampton's "popularity" in the *Calendar of State Papers Venetian, 1619–21*, 275, and to H. G. R. Reade, *Sidelights on the Thirty Years War*, 3 vols. (1924), 1:24, quoting the Tuscan ambassador, Gabaleone. According to Adams, in January of 1624 Sir Nathaniel Rich accused Sandys of trying to create a Brownist republic in Virginia. *H. M. C. Villth Report, Part II* (Manuscripts of the Duke of Manchester), as cited by S. L. Adams, "Foreign Policy," 45.

rid."⁵¹ "Now you find," says Timoleon, "that Carthage looking on your stupid sleepes, and dull security, was invited to invade your Territories" (1.3.211–13). The similarity in this criticism and the use of "stupid," "sleep" and "security" in both authors suggests a direct influence, yet more important than influence is the sense of these as very similar responses to England's political situation, and part of a larger ideational context.⁵²

Like Scott, Timoleon portrays the aristocracy as excusing themselves from contributing to the national cause because their wealth would be preserved if not augmented by a Spanish alliance—or even "invasion." This satirized aristocratic position is of course an unpatriotic delusion, for once the Spanish take control, the English will in actuality be "rob'd and wearied" of their wealth.⁵³ "Do you prize your mucke / Above your liberties?" Timoleon addresses the Syracusan court,

And rather choose
To be made Bondmen, then to part with that
To which already you are slaves? Or can
It be in your flattering apprehensions,
You can capitulate with the Conquerour
And keepe that yours, which they come to possesse,
And while you kneele in vaine, will ravish from you?
(1.3.231–39)

Scott spoke, even in 1620, of Spain's intentions to "conquer" England, as has been noted.⁵⁴ Timoleon registers the same self-deception of the courtiers, that they think they can keep that which is theirs, when it is what the Carthaginians "came to possess" (238). Timoleon's arguments are not specific enough to require the events of late winter 1624 as an historic backdrop. While Massinger may have added certain small details to accord with the shifting tide of events, it is not necessary for

⁵¹ Scott, *A Tongue-combat*, Epistle Dedicatory, unpaginated, 3.

⁵² Scott continues to use the sleep metaphor in a pamphlet published the following year, which Limon takes in part as evidence for Massinger's revision: "so whiles England lyes gasping in her bed of peace and security, let the [Spanish] king your master prepare for warre" (*Vox Coeli, or News from Heaven* . . . [1624]; *Sommers Collection of Tracts*, 582; quoted from Limon, *Dangerous Matter*, 51). Indeed, this vocabulary is used much earlier by Scott in *The Belgicke Pismire: Stinging the Slothful Sleeper, and Awaking the Diligent* (London or Utrecht, 1622, and with addition in 1623): here Scott, like Timoleon, warns against "dull security" and against being "rocked asleep of desperate security, with a lullabie of peace and safety," so that "he derides all happy admonishion" (12), thus explaining his own derisive admonition.

⁵³ *Vox Populi*, B2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, B1, verso.

him to have made significant alterations, as Limon argues. Limon argues the entire first act would have been rewritten “during the period [i.e., March] when the play was bound to evoke particular and predictable associations in spectators or readers and by doing so functioned as a political text.”⁵⁵ The problem with this precise dating is that in early December the material in question would have evoked almost the same response. Fundamentally, the play must always have had the savior figure, Timoleon from Corinth, since he is crucial for the logic of the narrative, disjointed though it may be. Instead of embodying the cause of an actual figure, such as Mansfeldt, Timoleon’s arguments correspond more with popular sentiment toward the United Provinces, which had grown over a much longer period than the winter and spring of 1623–24.

Massinger’s sympathetic treatment of Timoleon’s republicanism provides a level of ideological complexity and a view of the “Art of government” (1.3.3) that has received little attention. A growing interest in republicanism in England resulted as popular sympathy was drawn towards the United Provinces and against the “tyrannical” Spanish. Fulke Greville’s appointment of the Dutch historian Isaac Dorislaus to a new chair in Cambridge is another example of how the intellectual ties with a Netherlands in crisis disseminated radical Dutch views. Dorislaus soon lost this post for teaching the republican elements of Tacitus, and also, it seems, for drawing comparison with recent events, as in the following recorded passage from a lecture:

With the majesty of rule divided between King and Senate or People, can force be brought against a King seizing a part not his own? For whoever shares part of the highest power must have the right to protect that part. The Dutch disputed this issue with the Spanish king by arms.⁵⁶

A comparison with contemporary events is ever-present in these lectures on Tacitus, which tend to distill political theories and problems from specific historical situations. Using the term *slavery* that has shaped

⁵⁵ Limon, *Dangerous Matter*, 84.

⁵⁶ *Tacitus: The Classical Heritage*, ed. Roland Mellor (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 120. Matthew Wren copied his first two lectures in 1627, and sent them to Bishop Laud. This is from a translation of that manuscript, which is in the Public Record Office on Chancery Lane. For more on Tacitus and Jacobean England, see in particular J. H. M. Salmon, “Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England,” in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 169–88 and 322 n. 3 for more bibliography. See also Alan T. Bradford, “Stuart Absolutism and the ‘Utility’ of Tacitus,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 45 (1983): 127–55, and Mary F. Tenney, “Tacitus in the Politics of Early Stuart England,” *Classical Journal* 37 (1941): 151–63.

other political criticism, he establishes a grid similar to other current accounts. "Some kings rule their subjects as slaves of a master," he begins the first lecture, "with the power of life and death. Some exercise a lawful rule and they are kept from unlimited power by the restraints of the laws" (118). With a striking republican bias, Dorislaus homes in on the implications of Roman political history, adding a distinctly contemporary twist to the old Tacitean perspective. It is, he argues, "worthy of considering by what law, because of what injury Brutus expelled King Tarquin from his ancestral throne" (119). The lectures use quite lionizing terms: "Brutus the Liberator" (120) refers to the "second Brutus," who "equaled the glorious reputation of the earlier Brutus by a similar deed" (119). Like Dorislaus, Massinger habitually fits Tacitean paradigms into a contemporary framework.

Timoleon's own arguments and self-presentation would have fit into the same discursive space; like Dorislaus, he is the embodiment of an ideological influence from a neighboring country. Timoleon's sense of the citizen's entitlement of "Liberty," like Dorislaus's, as in the lines posing "liberty" over "muck" previously quoted, takes a central place in the discourse of the two "valiant citizens," Timagoras and Leosthenes. Timagoras states that Carthage strives "to enlarge her Empire" and fastens "an unjust grip on us . . . that live free lords of Syracuse" (1.1.60–62). Archidamus himself, the Praetor of Syracuse, sees Timoleon as the man "to defend . . . our liberties" (1.3.8–9).⁵⁷ The "liberties" Timoleon has to teach them stretch beyond a mere political freedom from Carthaginian domination. The "Art of government" Timoleon brings from the Corinthian system also forms a criticism of the problems of Syracusan rule and, by association, the rule of James I. "I have . . . ever proclaym'd all such . . . as would usurp on others liberties," Timoleon remarks of holders of "absolute power" (86), to be "rebels to nature" (1.3.91–92). The comparison with contemporary political ideologies and tensions is recognizable even in the fact that Oldenbarnavelt had himself, in the unveiled topical play *Sir John Van Olden Barnavelt*, attempted to apply the "art of government" (2253–54) to control "absolute rule" (2440). The "art of government" Timoleon brings seems to come from both the fictive world of Corinth and the real world of the Netherlands.

Timoleon's ideas about government figure prominently in his open-

⁵⁷ Archidamus then goes on to argue, in the very words of James himself, that "treasure" is one of the "sinews of Warre" (15–16), a phrase James had used in a 1621 proclamation: "moneys being the great sinews of war." Lucy Aikin, *Memoirs of the Court of King James the First*, 2:196, quoted from *The Bondman*, ed. Spencer, 178.

ing speeches. He spurns a kingship not unlike that upheld by James himself:

Such honors
 To one ambitious of rule or titles;
 And absolute power on others; would with joy,
 Whose heaven on earth, is plac'd in his command,
 And veynes swolne high with pride, be entertain'd.
 (1.3.84–88)

Massinger's style combines a relative ease of syntax with a heavily enfolded, telescoping sentence pattern. Like the censored passage from *The King and the Subject*, Timoleon criticizes divine right: "heaven" "is plac'd in his command." The subtlety and difficulty of the language perhaps helps veil what is a similar sentiment in *The King and the Subject*, the implicit criticism in "heaven on earth" gives way to an ambiguity not sustained in the more forward but censored line in the later play, "bowing to their wills as deities." Timoleon's critique of absolute power here and later in his speech—where he opposes "absolute monarchy" and "Aristocracy" (132–33)—would echo even the self-definition of James, who frequently proclaimed the "absolute power of a king."⁵⁸ "Like God's true Vicegerent," James called himself in the publication of parliamentary proceedings of 1621, where he goes on to open the "forbidden arke of our absolute and indisputable prerogative."⁵⁹

P. G. Lake has called attention to the constitutional position and ideology that grew out of the debates concerning Anglo-Spanish and Anglo-Dutch relations.⁶⁰ Thomas Scott was perhaps the loudest and most confrontational advocate of a political theory that challenged James's own. Scott's political ideas and freedom of speech derive in part from the sequence of events which exiled him to the United Provinces, where he was able to publish with some immunity, and was introduced to Dutch political arguments. Scott's writing often confronts James directly. "Saloman or Caesar must not rule without a Law nor by his absolute power make any but see to the execution of those that are made. It inclines therefore too much towards tyranny for a Magistrate to exercise an absolute authority without limit."⁶¹ In "Solomon," Scott repre-

⁵⁸ This is from a March 10th, 1610 address (*Political Writings*, 180).

⁵⁹ Published in 1622 (STC 9241); in *Political Writings*, 250.

⁶⁰ P. G. Lake, "Constitutional Consensus and Puritan Opposition in the 1620s: Thomas Scott and the Spanish Match," *Historical Journal* 25 (1982): 805–25.

⁶¹ Thomas Scott, *The Highways of God and the King delivered in two sermons preached at*

sents the iconography of James, as he does in *Vox Populi*, in the cutting phrase of Gondomar aimed directly at James, that young women are "abler to worke Solomon to their opinion then Solomon to work them to his fault."⁶²

Lake argues that Scott's "view of the Parliament and the workings of the constitution can hardly be regarded as novel or unusual. Scott was dealing in the common currency of contemporary political debate."⁶³ Scott's experience allows for a slightly bolder voice, Lake suggests, but not an atypical opinion: "It could be argued that in so far as Scott's admittedly untypical actions freed him from the constraints which bound men of similar opinions allowed him to develop and express in a polemically coherent and consistent form tendencies inherent in many of the commonplaces of the period. . . . Scott was operating within what he and certainly most of his contemporaries assumed to be an ideological consensus."⁶⁴ But "consensus" must be an exaggeration, primarily because Scott would not try to convince his compatriots of something they already agreed to at the risk of his life, but also because Scott had a less common predilection for Dutch republicanism. Even his more popular criticism of English foreign policy with Spain does not resemble a consensus. But latent in the policy concerns between these nations, and the language used in negotiating with them, were their politics, and thus the language of policy becomes inseparable from that of politics, especially when England is implicitly drawn into a power struggle that derives from the Spanish-Dutch conflict. Indeed, Dutch political ideology was shaped in opposition to Spanish absolutism; the Dutch declaration of independence itself casts Spanish rule, as in the slaves and bondmen of Massinger, as "slavery." In 1581 the States General of the United Provinces resolved, "in conformity with the law of nature and for the protection of our own rights . . . and the liberties of the fatherland," that they should no longer reside under the "Spanish slavery" of Philip II.⁶⁵ The use of the "laws of nature" to describe their entitlement to freedom is suggestively echoed in Timoleon's opening speech, that monarchs who "usurp on others liberties" are "rebels to

Thetford in Norfolk anno. 1620 (London, 1623), 69, as quoted by P. G. Lake, "Constitutional Consensus," 808.

⁶² *Vox Populi*, B2.

⁶³ Lake, "Constitutional Consensus," 806.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 807.

⁶⁵ Act of Abjuration, in *Texts Concerning the Revolt of the Netherlands*, ed. E. H. Kossmann and A. F. Mellink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 225.

nature" (1.3.93). In *A Tongue-combat*, Scott describes the Dutch government as "the true and *naturall* constitution of that mixed Government."⁶⁶

The implications of Anglo-Dutch relations are illustrated in *A Tongue-combat*, which portrays an argument between two English soldiers, one on his way to help the Spanish and the other to help the Dutch. The argument focuses considerably on the ideology: the Dutch are in the wrong, argues the soldier fighting for the Spanish (called "Red-Scarfe"), because they are "Rebels," who overthrew a "lawfull sovereign Lord" Philip II.⁶⁷ The Dutch had been ruled by Philip by rightful inheritance, and he did not "impose upon the people any pressures, more than his former Ancestors had done."⁶⁸ Red-Scarfe depicts the Dutch from an elitist perspective. The Dutch Revolt, he argues, was undertaken by lowly "rascall multitudes" who "wore fox tayles on their heads" and bore signs with the words "flourish may the Rogues over all the world."⁶⁹ Red-Scarfe paints the Dutch rebellion as a sort of slave rebellion, a view of the Dutch that may have colored Massinger's treatment of Pisander's rebellion in *The Bondman*.

Tawny-Scarfe, the soldier with a Dutch bias, reminds Red-Scarfe that "Queen Elizabeth of happy memorie" had assisted "the States Generall in these wars against the king of Spayne," and that the Dutch were abused by "tyranny and oppression."⁷⁰ The condition of the Dutch under the Habsburgs was not "in as great tranquillitie as ever they had been,"⁷¹ but slowly encroached upon such that their "ancient and laudable Lawes, Priviledges, and Liberties (even such as were fundamentale)" were "violat[ed]."⁷² By such encroachment, the Dutch endured a "totall and finall losse of their Liberties."⁷³ The use of "liberties" here appeals to the discourse of right which Scott developed in earlier pamphlets, and which occupied parliamentary debates with James. In the midst of the soldier's speech, Scott explains his intentions of relating how the Spanish "stole upon the people's Liberties by policie," "contrary to the fundamental laws of the State": so the story might function

⁶⁶ My italics. Thomas Scott, *A Tongue-combat*, 12. Somewhere the Dutch declaration was probably available to Englishmen. In this document, Scott produces "some of the Articles containing these freedomes" (14).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 7 and 9.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 12.

"as a mirrour to warne all magistrates to beware of tyrannie and be content in manly moderation, lest Lucifer-like, seeking to become gods, they proove divellish Tyrants, and so loose their first angelicall seates of Sovereignty." ⁷⁴ In this way he asserts the function of his text as a mirror for magistrates, but particularly English magistrates, whose assertions of divine right have occupied the bulk of Scott's critique. It is the same language Scott has been using throughout his pamphlets to describe English rule, as in his words that Solomon ought not to rule by "absolute power," because it "inclines . . . towards tyranny." ⁷⁵ Yet the solution in this case—or at least the Dutch solution—was to establish a formal defense against such tyranny in its mixed government. The analogy to England becomes clear in the comparison that follows: "For this end also they chose a certaine mixed number of the Nobles and Commons to sit in councill, whom they called States General, at least power to qualifie the over-swelling torrent of Tyrannie in the superior . . . as our Parliaments in England use to doe." ⁷⁶ The archaic present tense of "use" rather than "used to do," that parliaments *are* accustomed rather than *were* accustomed, suggests a state of current agreement that Scott's other writings and the situation somewhat belie. The words nonetheless evoke a certain level of irony expressed in the language itself: Parliament qualifies "the over-swelling torrent of Tyrannie in the superior": i.e., James.

The pamphlet is striking not only for its comparative look at the arts of government, but also for the degree of admiration for the Dutch system:

Their Government also was as free as government could possibly be: they chose their Governours themselves . . . , and ever had respect that their Liberties and welfares should not rest in the bosome or disposition of one man onley; but so wisely and warily provided, that were he wise or foolish, vertuous or wicked, valiant or cowardly, true or false that ruled for the time, he might profit them, but should have no power to ruine them himself, or betray them to be ruined by the tyrannie of others.

The language of this admiration once again contrasts with the "absolute power" he sees James striving to maintain: Charles V encroached upon this tradition in Dutch self-government, and tried to mold Holland into a "new form of government" and make himself "absolute king." Charles's son Philip II was able to carry through these inten-

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ As cited in n. 61 above.

⁷⁶ Thomas Scott, *A Tongue-combat*, 13.

tions, reducing the country to “absolute obedience.”⁷⁷ For that encroachment on their rights, as Tawny-Scarfe and the narrator argue, the Dutch rightfully rebelled. The analogy to English rule is sustained by the constant stress on “absolute rule,” a word which formerly occupied his critiques of Jacobean rule. This analogy is facilitated in Scott’s earlier indication of purpose: that this account should act as a “mirror” to warn “all magistrates.” This account affords a more sophisticated critique than his former work, in that liberty becomes an element of the political constitution, rather than merely a nebulous right, and absolute rule is shown, as in *Massinger*, to make people corrupt.

The debate initiated by the political position of the Dutch informs the ideological tensions of *The Bondman*. Timoleon poses a similar moral problem to that of Holland’s rebellion in the story of his brother Timophanes’s “Tyrannous Usurpation” of his country:

no persuasion
 Could winne him to desist from his bad practice
 To change the Aristocracy of Corinth
 Into an absolute Monarchy.

(1.3.129–32)

Though Timophanes was, as Plutarch relates, Timoleon’s brother, even in this case it is better to be “a pious and obedient sonne” to his “country” than lend

Assistance to Timophanes, though my brother,
 That like a tyrant strove to set his foote
 Upon the Cities Freedome.

(1.3.133–37)

The nature of Timophanes’s crime against the state is simply one of government, and one that would strike home: he committed no further abuse than to aspire towards an absolute monarchy, the system James himself professes. The Syracusans respond to Timoleon’s story by saying,

If you free Sicilie
 From barbarous Carthage yoke, it will be said,
 In him you slew a Tyrant.

(140–43)

The logic is consistent with Scott’s arguments about Holland and England, and consistent with Dutch rhetoric itself.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 16, 20.

Timoleon's entrance is met with a comic response of the ladies of court. "He asked not our consent" (1.3.160), protests Olimpia, echoing in "consent" the type of government he represents. "I offered myself twice," she says, contorting the political notion into a sexual innuendo, "and yet the Churle would not salute me." "Let him kisse his Drumme, I'll save my lips," responds Corisca, the "proud wanton lady," married to a "fat impotent Lord," as the *dramatis personae* calls them. Both women go on to comment on his ideological neglect of their values: "He thinkes women / no part of the republique"; "He shall find / we are a Common-wealth" (1.3.164–65). Cleora's participation in arguing Timoleon's cause belies Corisca's suggestion that women cannot take part. The ladies' use of "republique" and "commonwealth" implies their corruption is systemic.

After his words against "absolute power," Timoleon goes on to say that he has "ever loved an equall freedom":

and proclaym'd all such
As would usurpe on others liberties,
Rebels to nature, to whose bounteous blessings
All men lay clayme as true legitimate sonnes.
(1.3.89–93)

Timoleon repeats the analogy of natural entitlement in calling his country his "best mother." The potential didacticism of Timoleon's politics is undercut by the use of the same arguments in rousing the slaves to rebellion. In the dramatic tradition of *in utramque partem*—of arguing both sides of the question—Massinger creates a second picture of applied republicanism in Pisander's arguments to the slaves:⁷⁸

Equall nature fashion'd us
All in one molde: The Beare serves not the Beare,
Nor the Wolfe, the Wolfe; 'twas ods of strength in tyrants,
That pluck'd the first linke from the Golden chayne
With which that thing of things bound in the world.
Why then, since we are taught, by their examples,
To love our Libertie, if not Command,
Should the strong serve the weak.

(2.3.32–39)

⁷⁸ The use of *in utramque partem* in early modern drama is explored in Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). See especially 1–11. Norbrook discusses the place of this in republican representations: see *Writing the English Republic*, 11, 211, 244, 285.

Here too an "Equal freedom" is argued for the sake of liberty against tyranny. The noble value that had so dominated the first act now becomes the chorus of roguish slaves: "Libertie, Libertie," cries Pisander, to which they echo "Libertie, Libertie" (2.3.144). This rebellion, however, is never really allowed to sway from its merely tragic-comic nature: "Use all freedom," Pisander cries, "but shed no blood" (2.3.115-16). The victims of the rebellion are those against whom the criticism was first lodged: the luxuriating aristocracy, whose skewed values make them parasites on the state. They themselves, as Timoleon earlier maintains, are no different from slaves: they cannot "part with that / to which already [they] are slaves" (1.3.234). After the slave revolt, the forced abstinence causes "the proud wanton lady," Corisca, to discover where she went wrong: "miserie instructs me now . . . that yesterday acknowledg'd / No Deitie beyond my lust and pride" (3.3.59-61). She relates that she used to complain "of Nature, as not liberal enough . . . To soothe my taste" (3.3.67-70). Yet even though the slave rebellion produces beneficial results, the appeal of the republican rhetoric to the rogues, and their use of it to rebel, registers a danger in adhering to political rhetoric by itself, or in good rhetoric wrongly used. Pisander supports this in saying that he uses the "thick skinn'd slaves" as "instruments to serve my ends" (3.1.2-3), which suggests that a free aristocracy can also manipulate the groundlings in its own interest.

In the nineteenth century, when Philip Massinger held a more secure place in literary history, he fell victim to some famous, though rather biased, political readings. Coleridge called him a "decided Whig" and a "democrat" and Beaumont and Fletcher "high-flying, passive-obedience Tories," an assessment which contributed not only to his sense of these playwrights' historical positions, but also their divergent aesthetics.⁷⁹ Yet Coleridge's designation of Massinger as a "democrat" is, as Anne Barton points out, a misnomer.⁸⁰ The republican ideas in his work and in the political discourse concerning Anglo-Dutch relations

⁷⁹ Coleridge's *Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. Raysor, 77. Of the greatest tragedians, he lectured elsewhere, "Massinger was a democrat, Beaumont and Fletcher the most servile *jure divino* royalists" (69). Where Beaumont and Fletcher teach the morals that were "fashionable in the reigns of James I and his successor, who died a martyr to them," "Massinger's plays breathe the opposite spirit" (85). Such political distinctions often accompany an aesthetic comparison, as in "Shakespeare's blank verse is an absolutely new creation . . . Ben Jonson's blank verse is very masterly and individual, and perhaps Massinger's is even still nobler. In Beaumont and Fletcher it is constantly slipping into lyricisms" (434; see also 77).

⁸⁰ Anne Barton, "The Distinctive Voice of Massinger," in *Philip Massinger: A Critical Re-assessment*, ed. Douglas Howard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 226.

do, however, deserve considerably more attention. Beyond a criticism of the growing absolutism of the English monarchy, the ideology was employed as a way of exalting a “revolted” Protestant country for the sake of encouraging an alliance with them. Scott’s fictitious debate between the two soldiers in *A Tongue-combat* is in part designed to convince those who had an ideological objection to the Dutch Revolt, which suggests that the circulation of republicanism in England now had a more broadly “political,” perhaps somewhat propagandistic purpose. Yet that circulation in itself allowed for the more serious consideration of alternate forms of government. The play and its surrounding ideational context also reveal an important correlation between politics and policy. The idea shared by Massinger and Scott in particular is that absolute rule promotes a corrupt, parasitic aristocracy whose self-indulgence causes them to put themselves before their country. Conversely, a more constitutional form, whether a republic, a mixed government, or a more securely parliamentary monarchy, promotes a stronger, less self-serving citizenship, able to make foreign policy decisions according to public, rather than private needs.⁸¹

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